

## **Grow A Rosebush to the Ceiling Together by ItsPineTime**

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Everyone Needs A Hug, Everyone needs and gets a hug, Implied/Referenced Homophobia, Internalized Homophobia, Introspection, Multi, Platonic Life Partners, Polyamory, Therapy

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Original Female Character(s), Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Robin Buckley & Steve Harrington, Robin Buckley/Original Female Character(s)

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2021-06-05

**Updated:** 2021-06-05

**Packaged:** 2022-03-31 15:01:39

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 5,013

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

“Nah.” Robin robin rolls over, away from Steve, on whim and smooshes her nose into the pillow on the floor. “It’s called being bisexual, I think.”

“Huh. So like. Both-sexual. Cause bi means both.”

Robin ineffectually aims a weak hit at him. “I knew that, you idiot.”

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Robin and Steve in their platonic love affair, from realisation to maybe even a happily ever after.

# Grow A Rosebush to the Celling Together

## Author's Note:

- For [QueenWithABeeThrone](#).

“It’s like—like, one day, I’m just going to get to family dinner and just fuckin’ *tell em*’, you know? I’m a lesbian, boom wham kazoom, it’s all out.” Robin tells the ceiling. She has to sit up a little to swallow the cheap beer, which is difficult when her arms feel like wet jell-o. Not dry jell-o, since that probably doesn’t exist.

Steve downs the rest of his can and burps.

“Yeah, well, s’not *that* hard.”

Robin snorts.

“Easy for you to say. You’ve got like a steel closet over there. I’m just here like, drooling over allllll over women. Your closet is covered in spikes, mine’s glass and only covered up by photos of topless women or something.”

Steve doesn’t reply, so Robin turns her head around to look at him through blurry eyes from where she’s sprawled on the floor. Because the furniture hasn’t arrived yet they’re lying on the floor for the welcoming party, a broken-into twenty-four pack lying between them.

“Steve. Steve.”

“Am I really—” He waves his hand aimlessly in the air and lets it flop to the floor. Robin scooches next to him and drops to lie beside him.

“*Dude*. Really? I’ve seen the way you look at Jonny-boy.”

“Oh.”

Steve is weirdly silent after the revelation. Robin stares at his face in a way that would definitely be uncomfortable if either of them were sober. It’s probably one of the reasons they even got so pissed in the

first place, she thinks, in a moment of heady insight. They're chasing after the easy (and very platonic, thank you very much) intimacy of being drugged by a Russian spy.

Well, maybe not the Russian spy bit.

"But—I'm not gay. So, you're wrong, right? You can't like girls and be gay, it's like, you know, impossible."

"Huh. You're right." Robin turns to stare at the ceiling like Steve is. It strikes her in a moment of whimsical nostalgia how far they've travelled and yet everything is the same. The ceiling may be different from the whitewashed ceiling of that bathroom that day, but it's a ceiling. No matter where she lives—which, face it, is more likely than not going to be Sunnydale for the rest of her life—there'll always be a ceiling to stare up at. She hopes there'll always be a Steve to stare at it with. And maybe a girl, yeah, because she may like Steve but she's also a raging lesbo.

"Jonathan is hot, though." Steve admits, just as Robin's about to drunkenly admit to the almost frighteningly soppy thoughts in her head. Which is honestly just as well, because Robin's not sure she could handle having to face this weird friendship-love any sooner than she needs to, thank you very much.

Robin snorts with laughter for a good minute. "So, you finally admit it!"

"But—what does that make *me*? Gay and straight?"

"Nah." Robin rolls over, away from Steve, on whim and smooshes her nose into the pillow on the floor. "It's called being bisexual, I think."

"Huh. So like. Both-sexual. Cause bi means both."

Robin ineffectually aims a weak hit at him. "I *knew that*, you idiot."

"Oh god. Oh god. My parents are going to kill me."

"Only if they find out, Steve-y boy. Only if they find out." Robin rolls over and gets on her knees. It takes a few tries, but she manages to

pry another cheap alcohol-vehicle from the pack.

“Hey, you want another?”

Steve’s not listening. Robin gets it, but only a little. Even when she was little she already knew she was different; strange, weird. It wasn’t easy, but it was slower, and Steve has probably never had to deal with this sudden realisation before. She gets a second one for him anyway.

“I should probably just ignore it.” Steve says, sitting up. His throat sounds a little raspy. “It’ll be easier that way. I can just find a nice girl to fall in love with, and no-one’ll ever have to know, right, Robin?”

The atmosphere is getting a little too heavy, and Robin’s head hurts from thinking too much (another difference from the high-confession) so she pokes him in the cheek, or at least tries to. She’s still pissed as all hell, so she ends up poking his mouth instead. Her finger comes back wet, and a string of saliva connects her finger to his mouth.

“What the *hell*—“

“Oh my god, ahahaha—” Her frantic laughing turns into wheezing as she collapses all over Steve’s chest.

She manages to pick Steve’s beer up on a second try from where she’d let it fall at some point, and lobs it at him.

“Here, drink. Leave all the heavy—heavy-brain—that stuff—till tomorrow. We still gotta get more drunk today, hey!”

“Why are you *singing*.”

“Shut up and drink, scoops-ahoy-boy.”

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Having Steve as a roommate is surprisingly not as much of a headache as it seemed like it’d be when they first thought up the idea. Booted out of school and with only insecure work, a high school diploma and lots of practice in monster-slaying and amateur spycraft that no job would accept on a CV, the pickings for rentals aren’t that

great, and a roommate helps lessen that burden. Robin's not *out* out—personally, she thinks her parents are in denial—but she's not locked securely in her closet either, and her relationship with her dear old mom and pop feels like it's constantly on the verge of collapse, mostly due to the unspeakable l-word, so moving out seemed like a good idea. She wants somewhere she can bring a possible girlfriend back to, after all, and her bedroom in her very conservative parents' household aint it, chief.

The second day, the one after the drunken slumber party, is significantly more awkward than the first. Probably, if she's being honest, because of the lack of alcohol. She probably needs to get a handle on that habit soon. Robin never thought she'd have to play counsellor to a babygay—much less Steve Harrington, good *lord*—but she does care about him, yada yada yada. Bottom line is—

“You can’t hide from yourself and expect it to all become okay.”

Steve freezes.

“Uh, how is eating cheerios exactly me hiding from myself?”

It’s not the way she intended to start the conversation, but it’s started now, so Robin’ll go with the flow. “You know that’s not what I meant, dude.”

Steve doesn’t deny it. He remembers too, then.

Robin decides to launch into her speech now, before she loses the nerve. “Look. I get that it’s scary to realise something like this about yourself. I get it, I went through it too. But look, whether you decide to act on your totally mega-gay fantasies of bathing with twenty hot dudes or whatever lives rent-free in that twinkly head of yours, if you want to be at peace with yourself you’ve gotta at least accept what you feel, even if you don’t act on it.”

“I’m just—I just, I don’t know, Robin. That sounds nice and all, but I don’t want to live a life where I lie to myself constantly. But I don’t want to be gay—or bisexual, or whatever. I’ve seen guys getting beat up just for dressing gay, acting like a *faggot*. I don’t want that. I’ve never fucking wanted it.

“So, what, repressing your feelings is going to solve all that?”

“Maybe. I don’t know.”

“It won’t.”

Steve turns to her, fingers clenching tightly on the spoon.

“Yeah, you know what? Maybe it will. Because if I can just *forget* what I’m feeling, forget it all and lock it away somewhere, I’ll be able to live a normal life. I won’t have to lie to anyone or be constantly on guard or worry about who I can trust.” He turns back to his bowl of cheerios and thrusts his spoon aggressively into them.

“Look, pardon my French—*escusemoi*, or whatever—but that’s just *bullshit*. Look, it sucks not fitting into the world all the time. And yeah, I can’t be my full self around most people. But there’s a lot of joy in being different too. I may not have chosen to be the way I am, but it’s part of me, and I think if you look deep into yourself you’ll find that what you are is part of you, too.”

Steve snorts. “You sounded like Nancy there, when you said it was *bullshit*.”

She sighs. “Think about it.”

Steve nods. Smiles. “Yeah, I will.”

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Being roommates with Steve is definitely better than Robin expected, but there are things nothing could really prepare her for. The first night she wakes up to Steve screaming his lungs out is not one she’ll ever forget. Nancy was right, then, when she said that all of them would never really get over it all.

Steve doesn’t want to talk during the day, but the darkness of night and the rushing emotions make him more open, the way alcohol does. It helps her process her own emotions too, to talk about it all. She hasn’t gone through nearly as much horrifying stuff as Steve did, thank god,

having coming rather late to the investigation team, but she has night terrors too. Sometimes, when they both can't sleep or one of them is having a particularly bad night, they'll lie together on the floor of their living room, like they did on the first night, and stare up at the ceiling. They don't often drink—only when necessary, Steve insists, on the request of a concerned Nancy—but the closeness and the memories is often enough.

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Nancy is kind and perceptive in a way none of Robin's other (very few) friends are, and not afraid to be open about her emotions. It's something Jonathan brings out in her but is still intrinsically hers: that stubborn, wilful kindness and strength in equal manner. She's not Robin's type, of course, but she can see why Steve's fallen so hard for her, and so many times over too.

Ever since Hopper and Joyce moved in together, the default gathering place for the biweekly "Is there anything at all suspicious happening in Hawkins" squad had become their (formerly only Joyce, Jonathan and Will's) house. The meetings take hours: there's usually a barbecue and dinner, icecreams if it's hot and hot chocolate, tea and coffee if it's cold. Usually, they're done with the serious monster-watch stuff in the first half hour. The kids go off to talk in their rooms, but they always come back when it's time of board games and movie watching.

It had been difficult at first to feel welcomed in such an already close-knit group, bonded by traumas she wasn't there for (for which she is eternally grateful. The descriptions of Demogorgon era or possessed Will make Crazy Russian Interrogator look like a dancy daisy), but everyone there are good folks. Robin doesn't have the time or the will to individually bond with every single person, but the group spirit that is formed feels welcoming, like—coming home for the first time in your life.

Before them, Robin doesn't think she had ever felt what unconditional love was like. Neither her nor Steve has told any one of them about *that*, but Robin feels that they'd all be okay with it. Hopper, she thinks, would take some explaining to, and of course they're not perfect, but they're a better family than Robin's biological one. Dustin is fun, like the serious nerdy little brother with a big

heart she never had, and Max and Eleven have adopted her as a wise older sister. It's a truly terrible choice—Robin has no experience with half of the things they want advice on, but it's fun. Family has never been fun before.

They're not all as close with each other. Their relationships aren't equal in strength, like a traditional family with the father and mother and two point five kids. It's like the roots of a huge tree—branching out even further into smaller, closer units. But no matter how far they spread or which root they come from, they're all the same tree. It's kind of like what Robin imagines it's like to have a huge extended family, and she wouldn't exchange it for the world.

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Robin met Katrina ("call me Kay") at group therapy, because of course she did. She only went in the first place because Steve had been bugging her about it—going on about his own kumbaya zen moment when he'd finally clicked with the last therapist in a long, unsuccessful line that he'd only started to appease Nancy, anyway. He couldn't talk about the monster stuff, of course, but he could talk about the gay stuff. Jonathan had been happy for him too, but in a very typical guy way that makes Robin very glad that she's a lesbian. Probably what Kay would call toxic masculinity. She's read so much and could talk about it for hours—Robin loves *that* about her too. She loved, and loves, that her hair feels like grass between her fingers its so short, that she's flat as a board, and the black mole on the corner of her mouth sitting over tanned skin like a black flower on fresh earth. The first day after they met, Robin spent the week leading up to the next session bouncing around the flat, ranting to Steve and frantically reading the one Judith Butler book she'd picked up one time and swore she'd eventually read.

Somehow, Kay didn't reject her. It astounds Robin to this day.

"I don't know why you're so astounded." Steve tells her. It's hard to take him seriously when his face is twisted like it is now, eyebrows furrowed and words emphasized. Robin snorts in half-mocking laughter, which she does quite a lot around Steve.

"Really. You're funny."

“Robin, really. I’m being serious. Look, I get that this woman is perfect, she’s an incomparable angel, yada yada yada, but at the end of the day you’re special too. You’re objectively a funny, caring, *hilarious* person. She’s lucky to have you.”

“You called me funny twice.”

“Not important. Robin, I mean it, you are *worth it*.”

She decides to let it go, just this once.

“Thanks. Genuinely.”

“No problemo. Where are you two meeting?”

If she were a cartoon character, Robin’s pretty sure that her eyes would have hearts in them right now.

“Well, there’s not a single gay bar or club in any sane person’s definition of near here since Hawkins is such a shithole—”

“—you don’t mean that.”

“Fight me.” Robin wiggles her eyebrows playfully, hyped up, and immediately faceplants into the desk. “God, sorry, please ignore me, I’m just excited out of my mind. She said yes, Steve! And we’re going to this cute little café, *Karen’s Cakes*. It’s far enough away from here that if we accidentally let it slip then we don’t have to deal with the landlord finding out or anything.”

“You going to bring her back here?”

“Honestly, Harrington, seeing *your* face is definitely waaaaay past first date material. And not in a good way.”

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Robin and Kay continue to date in secret. Steve never dates anyone, male or female, continuing to be hung up on the two he’d let go. A year passes: people eventually start asking questions—their parents, most of all. Well, they never really *stopped* asking questions, but they start asking more often, and more insistently. It’s Robin’s father ignoring all her pleas for him to change the subject and stop talking

about how living with a man is what's driving off all her many, many possible boyfriends that finally pushes her over her limit.

"Right, Harrington." Robin announces when she finally comes home that evening to find him slumped in front of the TV. "That's it. We're dating now."

"Wait, what?" His face goes slack in confusion. "But you're a lesbian."

"Incredible detective work, Harrington, really. Of course we're not *actually* dating. But I need an excuse to not date or be looking to date anyone, and you're hopelessly back in love with lover-boy and lover-girl anyway, so it's no skin off your back."

"Can't you just, I don't know, ignore it?"

Robin fixes him with a serious stare. "Steve. I may not have the most stellar relationship with my parents, but I still value their lives and if they spend over half their visit talking about my future good Christian husband one more goddam time I'll kill them. Only you can save me, Harrington."

Steve just stares, thinking.

"Seriously dude, it's very awkward to talk my way out of talking to men who're interested in all *this* when they know I'm single. Do it for Kay's sake."

"*Pretty please? Be my beard?*"

He sighs, finally.

"Alright. Let's do it. You can cover for me if I ever get a date too, right?"

Robin bounces up, excited beyond all belief.

"Of course!"

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Pretending to date is awkward and sometimes humiliating (holding

*Steve Harrington's* hand, urgh) but honestly, it's easier to navigate life as platonic life partners, or foreverbuds as Steve likes to call them loudly in front of his two very oblivious crushes, when they're officially together. It also gives Robin cover for her more obviously gay moments, with Kay disguised merely as a best friend, oh what a cute pair of gal pals, rather than the wonderful beautiful partner that she is and that Robin wants to show to everybody in their life.

If there's one thing about the great fake-dating plan that Robin feared the most, it was having to actually come out. They draw the line at lying to their family.

Mostly, it's as Robin expected. Nobody apart from the oblivious Dustin didn't harbour some suspicions at her very not-straightness, and everyone still needs some informing on what they can and can't say: what's it's like to be gay, and dispelling myths they've got in their heads. She also has to suffer through several apologies for jokes said in ignorance in the past, which Robin really prefers not to dwell on, but listens to anyway. She supposes its what Kay would call the adjustment phase of realising the gay identity of your loved one. It's definitely not pleasant, but Robin gets that she can't expect them to come pre-educated, although she wishes to a non-existent god that they would. Steve comes out too, probably just because coming out as bisexual having never properly dated a man outside of a couple of one-night stands when they visited less-shitholey towns with actual gay bars pales in comparison to "The girl you thought was my best friend is actually my girlfriend and I'll be pretending to date my *actual* best friend to hide the fact that I'm a raging lesbo."

It's vulnerable. Robin only hopes it's the right thing as well.

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The first shock comes when Jonathan approaches her to talk alone, and awkwardly asks her about her experience as a lesbian. Turns out, he's probably-maybe attracted to men and freaking out only a little bit. Steve would probably be more help, Robin thinks, but then remembers the way Steve looks at Jonathan and the way Jonathan looks so freaked out and figures that there's probably a reason he's approaching her not him. It leaves her without her usual gossip partner, so Kay has to substitute in for Steve.

She puts Jonathan into contact with some gay and bi dudes who he can speak to, and considers it a job well done. He's definitely more comfortable talking to other men about it, which Robin definitely understands. He tells her he'll tell Nancy when he's got his head in order about it. It's a good idea that Robin appreciates—open communication is a balm to all relationships, after all, she never believed it until she got into a relationship herself (and until Kay gave her a ten-minute lecture on the importance of communication for establishing trust which Robin admittedly mostly spent staring, entranced, into her soft brown eyes and remembering what her soft hands felt like). That is, until the talk sends Nancy scurrying back to Robin to try and figure out her feelings about it.

(If Robin's going to be mandated to counsel all these babygays and now their partners, she better get compensated eventually, that's all she's saying.)

"Look Nancy, all I'm saying is, y'know, what does this really change for you?" Robin puts on her wise counsellor face and speaks seriously. Nancy having doubts is not that surprising, honestly, and Robin believes that their relationships is strong enough to withstand the process of self-discovery. Nancy is kind and strong: she'll be able to get through it. "He's still the same Jonathan. He still loves you, still cares about you, still finds you beautiful. Nothing about that has changed. This has always been a part of your Jonathan—it's just that now he's aware of a part of himself that he wasn't before."

Nancy shakes her head, ducking her head and looking pensive. "No, no." Robin's fully prepared to go off on another scripted speech when Nancy finishes her thought, blurting it all out in a rush.

"You've got it all wrong. It's not that I think Jonathan's wrong, it's that I think I want to have a romantic threesome with my boyfriend and my ex."

Well. Robin raises her eyebrows, and promptly chuck's good, sensible counsellor-Robin out of the metaphorical window to lock in on the juicy gossip presented to her.

"A—romantic threesome?"

Nancy blushes, although she's still smiling slightly, taking the awkward talk with more grace than Robin ever thought was humanly possible. "You know, whatever you call a couple that's three people. I want to date Steve and Jonathan at the same time. And I think they'd want to date each other too."

Robin thinks that's true. Having touched only briefly on gay culture due to finding her wonderful girlfriend so early in her first partner, she still knows that triads, as they're called, are not uncommon, although it's rare for them to contain a straight, or straight-passing, couple.

"It's called a triad. And, between me and you, I think you're right: Steve has totally got the hots for both you *and* Steve—" she throws a wink at Nancy—"and from what I've seen Jonathan's got it for Steve too. You've got to approach it right, though. You can't assume Jonathan will be up for it just because he also likes Steve. It'll change the dynamic you have as a couple and you can't stop that, so don't gloss over it, but it'll also give you a lot more that you would never expect, and you can schedule times to have one-on-one time too."

*Wow, I'm really good at this advice thing, aren't I?* She pats herself on the back internally, keeping the many jokes to herself. This is a difficult time for Nancy too, after all. Nancy nods again. Robin gives her time to process.

She looks up after a minute, and smiles at Robin, a beaming grin that makes her very glad to have her as a friend, and hugs her gently.

"Thank you for the advice. I'm not sure who else I could have come to, honestly. My parent's definitely wouldn't understand, that's for sure."

"Well, you're lucky that you've had me paving the way for you." Robin jokes. "First there's a lesbian, to soften them up to monogamous gay relationships, and now we can finally unleash our masterplan and force them to accept a gay polyamorous relationship."

Nancy breaks into loud, almost hysterical giggles, and clutches robin tight around the waist, she's laughing so hard.

“Oh my god, why am I laughing, it’s not even *funny*.”

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Robin gets the low-down of every date from Steve from the solo dates to the group dates (the ones with Jonathan alone were the most awkward at first, he told her, as they snuggled into the duvets on his bed together in the winter, but that soon faded when they got to the kissing), of course, and has to run cover for him a few times. Eventually Robin and Steve get the idea to introduce Kay to Jonathan and Nancy, and they get along famously, and they sometimes go on double-dates (with Kay as the ostensibly unlucky perpetual third wheel) that make it a lot easier to cover for everyone at once.

So when Robin and Steve finally decide it's high time to move out of their apartment, and both of them are thinking of bringing their relationships to a new level, the idea of buying a house to live in together is accepted pretty quickly and easily. It's an odd choice, but not one that raises too many eyebrows, since they'd all, excepting Kay, been so close for so long. Nancy and Steve are the ones able to contribute the most to the deposit and the assessment for the mortgage, since business had been booming at the *Hawkins Gazette* ever since Nancy and Jonathan loaned money from Nancy's parents and bought the them-leaderless and heavily in debt newspaper, but they all try their best.

The new house is big: seven bedrooms, two bathrooms and a kitchen, going cheap seeing as it's on the outskirts of Hawkins, an already isolated town. There's enough bedrooms for children, too, if they ever want them: Robin isn't interested in personally being a parent, but it would be nice to take part in an aunt sort of way in caring for the triad's kids, if they ever want them. Jonathan's the strongest advocate for children, surprisingly: Nancy's not further behind, and even Steve wants children some day.

The first thing they do in the new house is to raise the height of the border-wall all around the property. Privacy is important for their safety of mind, and the relief of being able to be free with her relationship is something Robin treasures, and Robin knows that Steve, Jonathan and Nancy feel the same way when she sees them sprawled over each other sunbathing, or bickering in the kitchen, arguing over who gets to sit in the middle. And every night they

gather by the television, watching some film or other fills something in Robin she didn't know she didn't have.

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Robin and Steve get a court marriage soon after they move in together, and Nancy and Jonathan do the same. It's good for taxes, and for abating Robin's, and Steve's, still blissfully ignorant (or in denial) parent's worries about them living together before marriage. There's no party, no fanfare, and although their parents pest them about it for weeks, it's a line none of them want to cross.

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Around three years after she and Kay started dating, and two after Steve joined Nancy and Jonathan, Kay proposes to Robin with a cheeky smile and a wreath of fresh pink roses to wear.

"I couldn't let you propose, since you had to ask me out first." Her smile, like always, is that of a beautiful angel robed in white. They can't wear rings, since the mismatch from the relationships they present would be too visible, but Kay has managed to take something so ugly and restrictive and make it beautiful, and Robin loves her for it. Someday, Robin promises herself, she and Kay, and Steve, Jonathan and Nancy, will be able to get married officially. But their love can't wait that long.

"I love it." Robin speaks quietly, something that doesn't happen often.

They wear matching wreaths for their wedding; Jonathan, Nancy and Steve do too, theirs black instead of pale pink. "For the cool factor" Steve insists "If we're going to defy God's will they we damn well better do it in the coolest, most satanic way possible", while Nancy and Jonathan laugh at him playfully. They get married in their house, safe behind high walls, with their extended monster-hunting family standing by and watching: perhaps not fully understanding (Steve confides in Robin that he *knows* the kids are dying to ask how they have sex, all three of them but are too polite to ask) but loving.

Late that night, when everyone else is asleep, Robin lies with Steve on the kitchen floor, only lightly buzzed (Nancy, the perpetual buzzkill, had decided that Steve had to cut down on his drinking.

Steve doesn't need it so much these days, anyway) and they stare up at another ceiling. Not unfamiliar, but the glow of the day seems to cast a new life on it: weigh it down with the soft glow of a thousand hopes for a future that is joyous and clean, where they are able to find happiness despite monsters and gates and secret government conspiracies and a society that hates what it doesn't understand.

"So." Robin says. He mouth feels dry. "We're finally here, huh. After all these years."

"Yeah."

"Do you think this is it?" Robin turns to face Steve. "The final ceiling we'll ever look up to like this?"

Steve doesn't speak for a while.

"You know." He says. Turns to meet Robins eyes, and smiles a smile devoid of shadows. "I think I'm finally beginning to realise that it doesn't matter if this is the last ceiling we ever look up to or if it's the millionth. What matters is that we're here with so many people who love us, who we love. And even if a gate opened right here in this kitchen and destroyed the house, nothing could ever take that from us. Right?"

Robin swallows the lump in her throat, feeling the weight of years of panic and stress falling off.

"Right." She reaches out to Steve's hand where it lies, limp by his side, and squeezes it with all she's got.

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The rose bushes the roses of the wreathes were cut from grow strong and sturdy in the garden, never ailing.

#### **Author's Note:**

I hope you liked it! I was working off my general knowledge of 1970s America to write this fic, so I'm sure some of the language I use is wrong or too modern, especially because I'm not American. I'm open to corrections (as well as concrit in general) :)

In the same vein, I have no practical experience with polyamory so I may also have made mistakes there.

Also, please note that when Robin and Steve say that the word bisexual refers to being attracted to "both" genders, I was writing that thinking what they would be most likely to believe. Bisexuality does not (always, YMMV) refer just to being attracted to men and women, and it is possible to be bisexual and be attracted to more than two genders.

Also, please forgive my shoddy titling skills.